

several times during the night, but its actual awakening followed that of the Hermit Thrush, which began singing at 4.02. The times noted were 4.08, 4.13, and 4.15, when frequent singing began.

I hope that more notes on the morning awakening may be made in many localities. Only thus can we get the data for accurate generalizations. And due allowance for the night-singing habit must be made in all such observations.—FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *West Roxbury, Mass.*

RECENT LITERATURE.

Cooke's 'Distribution and Migration of North American Rails.'¹

— In this important report Prof. Cooke presents a concise account of the geographic distribution and migration of the rails following the same plan adopted in his previous reports on the shore-birds, herons, etc. The bibliography of North American ornithology is becoming so enormous that it is practically impossible for the individual to compile with any degree of completeness such data as are here presented. The formation of such a card index as has been prepared by Prof. Cooke, from which reports like the present may be readily compiled, constitutes one of the most important pieces of work, from the standpoint of the ornithologist, that the U. S. Biological Survey has undertaken.

Maps showing graphically the summer and winter distribution of each species add greatly to the value of the report. The summary shows that 44 forms of rails and their allies occur north of Panama. Of these 21 are restricted to the West Indies and Middle America and two are stragglers from Europe leaving 21 forms occurring regularly in the United States.

The wanton slaughter of Soras and Clapper Rails by so called sportsmen has sadly reduced the number of these birds and the killing of 3000 of the former species on a 500 acre marsh on the James River, Va., in a single day, or of 10,000 Clapper Rails at Atlantic City, N. J., in a day, are incidents only too well known to those who were familiar with the practices of a few years ago.— W. S.

Wetmore on the Growth of the Tail Feathers of the Giant Hornbill.²

— In this bird, as is well known, the middle pair of rectrices greatly exceed the others in length. The fact that the examination of a considerable series failed to show any in which more than one of the pair was fully

¹ Distribution and Migration of North American Rails and their Allies. By Wells W. Cooke. Bull. U. S. Dept. Agriculture, No. 128. Sept. 25, 1914.

² A Peculiarity in the Growth of the Tail Feathers of the Giant Hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*). Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Vol. 47, pp. 497-500. October 24, 1914.

developed led Mr. Wetmore to a careful study of the available specimens which demonstrated beyond question that this is the normal condition in the species. One of these long feathers develops and is retained for more than a year, probably for two. The other one does not appear until the first has attained its full growth. Upon the molt of the first feather the other takes its place, so that there is always one long feather — the right and left alternately — while the other one is always very much shorter and only partly developed.— W. S.

Chapman on New Colombian Birds.¹— In the present paper Dr. Chapman describes twenty-six additional new forms from the rich collections obtained by the several expeditions sent out, under his direction, by the American Museum of Natural History. The problems of distribution presented by a study of these collections demand for their solution additional material from Antioquia and eastern Panama and to secure this the Museum has sent out two additional collecting parties under Messrs. L. E. Miller and W. B. Richardson.

Dr. Chapman is sparing no pains to make his study of the Colombian avifauna thorough in all its details and the further his work progresses the more anxiously do we await the final report upon the subject.

The present contribution even though admittedly preliminary, is a welcome relief from the wretched descriptions of two or three lines with which our literature is becoming overburdened. Not only are the diagnoses here presented full and adequate, with appropriate discussion, but in many instances brief contrasted descriptions of all the known forms of a group are given with their respective geographic ranges.— W. S.

Shufeldt on the Young of *Phalacrocorax atriceps georgianus*.²— This paper consists of a detailed account of a young cormorant twenty-four hours out of the egg. While no generalizations are suggested the condition of the various organs is minutely described as well as the progress of ossification in various parts of the skeleton, making a permanent record of facts that may be used in future comparative study.— W. S.

'Alaskan Bird-Life.'³— Through the generosity of one of its members the National Association of Audubon Societies has been enabled to carry its

¹ Diagnoses of apparently new Colombian Birds. III. By Frank M. Chapman. Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., XXXIII, Art. XL, pp. 603-637. November 21, 1914.

² Anatomical Notes on the Young of *Phalacrocorax Atriceps Georgianus*. By R. W. Shufeldt, M. D., extracted from a Report on the South Georgia Expedition. Sci. Bull. Mus. Brooklyn Inst. Arts and Sci., Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 41-102. November 5, 1914.

³ *Alaskan Bird-Life as Depicted by Many Writers*. Edited by Ernest Ingersoll, Seven Plates in Colors and other Illustrations. Published by the National Association of Audubon Societies. New York, 1914.